

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A system for facilitating distribution and accession of electronic files, comprising:

- (a) a service facility having an electronically accessible catalog of the electronic files, and a network interface for communicating over a communications network;
- (b) means for transmitting the catalog in response to a user request;
- (c) means for defining a customer account for a user to identify the user as a customer, to process payments from the customer and establish authorization for accessing an authorized plurality of the electronic files;
- (d) means for receiving from the network interface an order from the customer requesting selected ones of the electronic files;
- (e) means for enabling transmission of the selected files by the network interface to the customer as received data files; and
- (f) means for providing to the customer a player program for accessing the received data files, the player program being implemented for metering access to the received data files as limited by the authorization,

wherein the means for defining a customer account comprises means for electronically interrogating a computer being used by the user to determine a default media player setting of that computer.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the means for transmitting the selected files is enabled only while the authorization remains established.

3. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the means for transmitting the catalog is connected to the network interface for receipt of the user request therefrom and feeding the catalog thereto.

4. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the means for defining the user account is operatively connected to the network interface for communications with the user.

5. (Original) The system of claim 4, wherein the means for defining the customer account comprises means for setting an authorization level of the authorization to a first value corresponding to a first authorized plurality of the electronic files, and to a second value corresponding to a second plurality of the electronic files.

6. (Original) The system of claim 5, further comprising means for augmenting the authorization in accordance with further processing of payments by the customer.

7. (Original) The system of claim 4, wherein the means for defining the customer account comprises means for identifying existing file access software to be used by the customer, and wherein the player program is in the form of a software patch to be used in conjunction with the existing file access software.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the means for enabling the transmission comprises means for encrypting the electronic files and the player program comprises means for decrypting the received data files, the means for decrypting being operable only while the authorization remains established.

10. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the authorization is independent of the selected ones of the data files within the authorized plurality of electronic files.

11. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the authorization is further independent of the number of the selected ones of the data files.

12. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the authorization is for a period of time.

13. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the period of time is calendar time.

14. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the period of time is measured only upon accessing data of the received data files by the player program.

15. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the period of time is measured only during accessing data of the received data files by the player program.

16. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the authorization is for a collective number of accesses of data of the received data files.

17. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the number of accesses are counted only after a threshold period of time accessing each of the received data files.

18. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising means for renewing and/or extending the authorization in accordance with further processing of payments by the customer.

19. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising means for storing at least some of the electronic files at the service facility.

20. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising means for facilitating transmission of at least some of the selected files to the customer from remote locations.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the means for facilitating transmission comprises means for redirecting network communication with the customer from the service facility to a source facility over the communications network.

22. (Currently Amended) A method for facilitating distribution of electronic files to be accessed, comprising:

(a) providing a catalog of the electronic files for access by users of a communication network;

(b) defining a customer account for a user to identify the user as a customer, to process payments from the customer and to establish authorization for accessing an authorized plurality of the electronic files;

(c) enabling transmission of selected electronic files to the customer as received data files over the communication network in response to a customer order; and

(d) providing to the customer a player program for accessing and metering access to the received data files as limited by the authorization,

wherein a computer being used by the user is electronically interrogated to determine a default media player setting of that computer.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the enabling is for the selected electronic files to be transmitted in encrypted form, the method further comprising providing with the player program means for decrypting the received data files only while the authorization remains established.

24. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the authorization is independent of a number of the received data files within the authorized plurality of electronic files.

25. (Original) A process for accessing electronic files using the method of claim 22 wherein the authorization is for a predetermined period of time, the process further comprising:

(a) activating the player program;
(b) monitoring elapsed time; and
(c) inhibiting operation of the player program when the elapsed time reached the predetermined period.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein the monitoring is only during accessing of data of the received data files.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein the inhibiting is suppressed until the end of a currently accessed data file.

28. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein the monitoring is of calendar time.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein the monitoring commences only upon accessing of data of the received data files.

30. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein the inhibiting is suppressed until the end of a currently accessed data file.

31. (Currently Amended) A system for distributing and playing electronic media, comprising:

(a) a service facility having an electronically accessible library of data files, an electronically accessible catalog of the data files, and a network interface for communicating over a communications network;

(b) means for transmitting the catalog in response to a user request;

(c) means for defining a customer account for a user to identify the user as a customer, to process payments from the customer and establish authorization for accessing the library;

(d) means for receiving from the network interface an order from the customer requesting selected ones of the data files;

(e) means for transmitting the selected files by the network interface to the customer as received data files; and

(f) means for providing to the customer a player program for accessing the received data files, the player program being implemented for metering access to the received data files as limited by the authorization,

wherein the means for defining a customer account comprises means for electronically interrogating a computer being used by the user to determine a default media player setting of that computer.

32. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 31, wherein the means for transmitting the selected files is enabled only while the authorization remains established.

33. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 31, wherein the means for transmitting the catalog is connected to the network interface for receipt of the user request therefrom and feeding the catalog thereto.

34. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 31, wherein the means for defining the user account is operatively connected to the network interface for communications with the user.

35. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 31, wherein the means for transmitting comprises means for encrypting the data files and the player program comprises means for decrypting the received data files, the means for decrypting being operable only while the authorization remains established.

36. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 31, wherein the authorization is independent of the selected ones of the data files.

37. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 36, wherein the authorization is further independent of the number of the selected ones of the data files.

38. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 37, wherein the authorization is for a period of time.

39. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 38, wherein the period of time is measured only during accessing data of the received data files by the player program.

40. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 37, wherein the authorization is for a collective number of accesses of data of the received data files.

41. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40, wherein the number of accesses are counted only after a threshold period of time of accessing each of the received data files.

42. (Currently Amended) A method for distributing electronic media to be played, comprising:
providing the media at a service facility as an electronically accessible library of data files;

- (a) providing a catalog of the library files;
- (b) defining a customer account for a user to identify the user as a customer, to process payments from the customer and to establish authorization for accessing the library;
- (c) providing selected data files from the library to the customer as received data files in response to a customer order; and
- (d) providing to the customer a player program for accessing and metering access to the received data files,

wherein a computer being used by the user is electronically interrogated to determine a default media player setting of that computer.

43. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 42, wherein the step of providing a catalog includes enabling access to the catalog by users of a communication network.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein the step of providing selected data files comprises transmitting the data files over the communication network.

45. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 42, wherein the step of providing the player program comprises providing a player device having the player program implemented therein.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42, further comprising encrypting the data files, and providing with the player program means for decrypting the received data files only while the authorization remains established.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42, wherein the authorization is independent of a number of the received data files.

48. (Currently Amended) A process for playing electronic media using the method of claim 42, wherein the authorization is for a predetermined period of time, the process further comprising:

- (a) activating the player program;
- (b) monitoring elapsed time only during accessing of data of the received data files; and
- (c) inhibiting operation of the player program when the elapsed time reaches the predetermined period.

49. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 48, wherein the inhibiting is suppressed until the end of a currently accessed data file.

50. (Previously Presented) A process for playing electronic media using the method of claim 42 wherein the authorization is for a predetermined period of calendar time, the process further comprising:

- (a) activating the player program;
- (b) under user control, selecting a data file to be played;
- (c) monitoring a calendar time;
- (d) playing a selected file; and

(e) inhibiting operation of the player program when the calendar time reaches termination of the predetermined period.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50, wherein the inhibiting is suppressed until the end of a currently accessed data file.

52. (Currently Amended) A system for distributing and playing electronic files, comprising:

(a) a service facility having an electronically accessible library of files, an electronically accessible catalog of the files, and a network interface for communicating over a communications network;

(b) means for transmitting the catalog in response to a user request;

(c) means for defining a customer account for a user to identify the user as a customer, to process payments from the customer and establish authorization for accessing the library;

(d) means for receiving from the network interface an order from the customer requesting selected ones of the data files;

(e) means for transmitting the selected files by the network interface to the customer as received files; and

(f) means for providing to the customer an access program for accessing the received files, the access program being implemented for metering access to the received files as limited by the authorization,

wherein the means for defining a customer account comprises means for electronically interrogating a computer being used by the user to determine a default media player setting of that computer.

53. (Currently Amended) A method for distributing electronic files to be accessed, comprising:

(a) providing the files at a service facility as an electronically accessible library of files;

- (b) providing a catalog of the library files;
- (c) defining a customer account for a user to identify the user as a customer, to process payments from the customer and to establish authorization for accessing the library;
- (d) providing selected ones of the library files from the library to the customer as received files in response to a customer order; and
- (e) providing to the customer an access program for accessing and metering access to the received files,

wherein a computer being used by the user is electronically interrogated to determine a default media player setting of that computer.

54. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 31, wherein the means for defining the customer account further comprises means for augmenting or restoring the authorization.

55. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 54, wherein the player program is further implemented for activating the means for augmenting or restoring.

56. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 42, wherein the defining of the customer account further comprises augmenting or restoring the authorization.

57. (Previously Presented) A process for playing or accessing electronic media using the method of claim 26, further comprising:

- (a) activating the player program; and
- (b) under user control, operating the player program to effect the augmenting or restoring the authorization.

58. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 52, wherein the means for defining the customer account further comprises means for augmenting or restoring the authorization.

59. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 58, wherein the player program is further implemented for activating the means for augmenting or restoring.

60. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 53, wherein the defining of the customer account further comprises augmenting or restoring the authorization.

61. (Previously Presented) A process for playing or accessing electronic media using the method of claim 30, further comprising:

- (a) activating the player program; and
- (b) under user control, operating the player program to effect the augmenting or restoring authorization.

62. (New) A system for facilitating distribution and accession of electronic files, comprising:

- (a) a service facility having an electronically accessible catalog of the electronic files, and a network interface for communicating over a communications network;
- (b) means for transmitting the catalog in response to a user request;
- (c) means for defining a customer account for a user to identify the user as a customer, to process payments from the customer and establish authorization for accessing an authorized plurality of the electronic files;
- (d) means for receiving from the network interface an order from the customer requesting selected ones of the electronic files;
- (e) means for enabling transmission of the selected files by the network interface to the customer as received data files; and
- (f) means for providing to the customer a player program for accessing the received data files, the player program being implemented for metering access to the received data files as limited by the authorization,

wherein the means for defining the user account is operatively connected to the network interface for communications with the user,

the means for defining the customer account comprises means for identifying existing file access software to be used by the customer, and the player program is in the form of a software patch to be used in conjunction with the existing file access software, and

the means for identifying the existing file access software comprises means for electronically interrogating a computer being used by the user to determine a default media player setting of that computer, and the means for providing the player program comprises selecting the software patch from a stored plurality of player patches.

63. (New) The system of claim 62, wherein the means for defining the customer account comprises means for setting an authorization level of the authorization to a first value corresponding to a first authorized plurality of the electronic files, and to a second value corresponding to a second plurality of the electronic files.

64. (New) The system of claim 63, further comprising means for augmenting the authorization in accordance with further processing of payments by the customer.

65. (New) The system of claim 62, wherein the means for enabling the transmission comprises means for encrypting the electronic files and the player program comprises means for decrypting the received data files, the means for decrypting being operable only while the authorization remains established.

66. (New) The system of claim 62, wherein the authorization is independent of the selected ones of the data files within the authorized plurality of electronic files.

67. (New) The system of claim 66, wherein the authorization is further independent of the number of the selected ones of the data files.

68. (New) The system of claim 66, wherein the authorization is for a period of time.

69. (New) The system of claim 68, wherein the period of time is calendar time.

70. (New) The system of claim 69, wherein the period of time is measured only upon accessing data of the received data files by the player program.

71. (New) The system of claim 68, wherein the period of time is measured only during accessing data of the received data files by the player program.

72. (New) The system of claim 66, wherein the authorization is for a collective number of accesses of data of the received data files.

73. (New) The system of claim 72, wherein the number of accesses are counted only after a threshold period of time accessing each of the received data files.

74. (New) The system of claim 62, further comprising means for renewing and/or extending the authorization in accordance with further processing of payments by the customer.

75. (New) The system of claim 62, further comprising means for storing at least some of the electronic files at the service facility.

76. (New) The system of claim 62, further comprising means for facilitating transmission of at least some of the selected files to the customer from remote locations.

77. (New) The system of claim 76, wherein the means for facilitating transmission comprises means for redirecting network communication with the customer from the service facility to a source facility over the communications network.